

Message Text

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SUBJ: FOOD SUPPLIES

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1. SUMMARY AND COMMENT. ADMITTEDLY SPORADIC EMBASSY OBSERVATIONS OF CURRENT SOVIET FOOD SITUATION NOTES GENERALLY GOOD AVAILABILITY OF BREADS OF ALL SORTS BUT VERY LIMITED SUPPLIES OF MEATS WITH PORK SCARCEST. VEGETABLES AVAILABLE USUALLY OF POOR QUALITY ALTHOUGH SOME GOOD QUALITY, HIGH-PRICED ITEMS FROM THE CAUCASAS AND CENTRAL ASIA OBSERVED. POOR MEAT AND VEGETABLE SUPPLIES MAY SIMPLY REFLECT TYPICAL -- THOUGH PERHAPS SOMEWHAT POORER THAN USUAL -- WINTER SUPPLY SITUATION. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

2. MEAT SUPPLIES IN RIGA HAVE DIMINISHED SOMEWHAT (SEE REFTELS FOR EARLIER REPORTS) ALTHOUGH GENERAL AVAILABILITY REMAINS BETTER THAN IN MOST OF THE SOVIET UNION. SMALL INDOOR MARKET ON ULITSA LENINA HAD NO BEEF AVAILABLE AND ONLY LIMITED SUPPLY PIGS' HEADS AT R 1.20 KG. GOOD QUANTITIES OF PORK FAT SEEN AT 1.90 BUT MORE LIMITED SUPPLIES OF MUTTON AT 1.80, SCRAWNY CHICKEN AND DUCK AT 2.50 NOTED. GOOD SUPPLIES OF BROWN AND WHITE EGGS FROM .90 - 1.20 (10), BUTTER AT 3.50 AND BREADS - WHITE .12, BROWN .16, SWEET ROLLS .12 - .16 WERE IN EVIDENCE. OBSERVATIONS TAKEN JANUARY 27.

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CENTRAL MARKET NEXT TO TRAIN STATION WAS VISITED JANUARY 29.

NON-AVAILABILITY OF BEEF CONTINUED WITH LIMITED SUPPLIES OF PIGS' HEADS AT 1.20, PORK FAT AND BACON AT 1.80, PORK CHOPS AT 5.00, MUTTON AT 1.80, CHICKEN AND DUCK AT 2.50. GOOD SUPPLIES OF BROWN AND WHITE EGGS AT .90 - 1.20 (10), BUTTER AT 3.50, WHITE BREAD .12-.16, BROWN BREAD .16-.21 AND SWEET ROLLS .11-.18 WERE NOTED.

3. EMBOFFS VISITING CENTRAL "BAZAR" IN VENTSPILS, LATVIA, JANUARY 28, NOTED A CONTINUED DEARTH OF BEEF AND VERY LIMITED SUPPLIES OF VEAL FOR 2.85-2.90, PIGS' HEADS AT 2.50, MUTTON AT 2.90, CHICKEN AT 2.50, EGGS 1.20 PER 10 AND BUTTER AT 3.50. FAIRLY GOOD SUPPLIES OF PORK FAT IN SMALL BRICKS AT .21 NOTED IN ADDITION TO PLENTITUDE OF FRESH AND SMOKED FISH. BREAD SUPPLIES WERE ADEQUATE THOUGH HIGHER-PRICED WITH WHITE FROM .16-.21 AND BROWN FROM .21-23.

SMALL GASTRONOME DOWNTOWN OFFERED NO BEEF, CHICKEN, DUCKS, OR EGGS BUT DID HAVE LIMITED QUANTITY OF PORK SAUSAGE FROM 1.70 - 2.00, SMALL BRICKS OF PORK FAT AT .21 AND VERY LIMITED SUPPLIES OF MUTTON AT 2.85. GOOD SUPPLIES OF BUTTER AT 3.50 AND WHITE BREAD FROM .12-.16 AND BROWN FROM .15-.21 WERE NOTED.

4. DAO VISIT TO KAZAN' JANUARY 7-8 NOTED GOOD WHITE AND BROWN BREAD SUPPLIES AT .15.

JANUARY 27-30 DAO TRIP TO ASHKABAD OBSERVED PLENTIFUL BREAD SUPPLIES IN SHOPS AND MARKETS AND GENERALLY GOOD FRUIT AND VEGETABLE AVAILABILITY. SOVKHOZ MARKET OFFERED CUCUMBERS AND TOMATOES AT 2.50 WHITE STREET STALLS HAWKED BETTER QUALITY SPECIMENS AT 5.00.

DAO HAS BEEN MADE AWARE OF INTESE INTEREST IN BOTH MEAT (PARTICULARLY PORK - EXCEPT IN MOSLEM AREAS) AND BREAD SUPPLIES AND IS REORIENTING THEIR FOOD REPORTING ACCORDINGLY.

5. EMBOFFS IN BAKU 24 JANUARY OBSERVED IN SEVERAL GASTRONOMES LONG LINES OF SHOPPERS VYING FOR LIMITED SUPPLIES OF BEST QUALITY BEEF AT 3.60 WITH SOMEWHAT GREATER AVAILABILITY OF SECOND QUALITY BEEF FOR 1.60. PORK PRODUCTS IN THIS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TRADITIONALLY MOSLEM AREA WERE AVAILABLE IN VERY LIMITED AMOUNTS FROM 2.00 - 2.10. NO MUTTON, CHICKEN OR EGGS WERE OBSERVED THOUGH GOOD BUTTER AT 3.10 AND BREADS WERE NOTED. OBSERVATIONS MADE LATE IN DAY WHICH MAY UNFAVORABLY COLOR FOOD SITUATION.

6. DAO TRIP TO KIEV JANUARY 27 FOUND NO PORK, MUTTON OR CHICKEN OFFERED AT TWO STORES VISITED. MAGAZIN NO. 5 KARASNOYA PL. HAD

GOOD SUPPLIES OF FIRST QUALITY BEEF AT 1.90, PORK FAT
AT 1.85, DUCK AT 1.80, TURKEY FOR 2.60, EGGS 1.10 PER 10
AND BUTTER.68/200 G. BREAD WAS NOT SOLD.

UNNUMBERED GASTRONOME IN CITY CENTER OFFERED LIMITED
AMOUNTS OF SECOND QUALITY BEEF AT 1.50 AND TURKEY
AT 2.60. EGGS AT 1.20 PER 10 AND BUTTER .33-.35/100 G.
BUT BREAD WAS NOT OFFERED.

FRESH PRODUCE (POTATOES, BEETS, CARROTS AND
CABBAGE) GENERALLY AVAILABLE. BREAD STORES HAD GOOD OFFER-
INGS OF ALL SORTS.
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